The Theosophical FORUM

FEBRUARY 1902

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THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

VOL. 7. FEBRUARY, 1902 No. 10

WHY ?

Because the World-Soul, the All, seeks to know itself. It divides itself, each part being by turns knower and known. The two are joined by the act of knowing. So that we have a series of three—knower, knowing, known. Or, considering the process as will, rather than perception, the three are—cause, copula, effect: a causal series.

A circle may be divided in an infinite number of ways, by diameters which are infinite in number; yet each pair of half circles makes up the whole circle. So there are, in the World-Soul, an infinite number of series of knower, knowing, known, while each is but the representative of the One.

This is differentiation. When the three members of a series are considered in succession, the idea of duration, of time, arises.

When the individual knower receives several different impressions at once the necessity for room for these to exist in, side by side, being felt, gives rise to the idea of space.

In this way, causation, or the idea of the causal series, is the parent of time, and the grand-parent of space. Thus in three degrees is built the stage of the world-drama.

The individual knower clothes itself with a vesture for each of these degrees. First, the causal body, before time, and therefore beginningless, endless, immortal. Second, the psychic body, in time, but above space; its perceptions are telepathic, that is, independent of distance, or separation in space. Third and last, the physical body, subject to limits in both time and space, and therefore the field of defined and centered perception and action; in virtue of which, concentrated and definite perception is here first reached, and perfect individualisation of knowing, and therefore of knower and known also, is first attained.

When this defined consciousness has once been attained, it will be withdrawn again from space, returning to the psychic world, so that the now clearly defined knower will reach all objects in turn, whether they are near or far.

Then the limitation of succession will be conquered, so that the knower shall know all things, not successively, but simultaneously. Finally will be overcome the first imagined barrier of separation, so that the infinite number of knowers, knowing all things at once, will further know themselves identical in the One, which will thus have reached perfectly self-conscious omniscience and omnipotence.

This is the answer to the world-puzzle and the possible *because* of the ever recurring *why*.

HEREDITY OR REBIRTH?

For many generations the transmission of individually acquired characteristics from parents to offspring has been an universally accepted doctrine. Innumerable resemblances seemed to establish it beyond peradventure. Children, the counterparts in the sense of copies, of one parent or the other or both, in unnumbered thousands, not to speak of the animal kingdom with the experiences of breeding, appeared to illustrate and establish an invariable law of heredity. In instances where there were lapses or breaks in this chain of sequence, and such are many and perplexing, the theory of atavism, a deriving back from more remote ancestors, has been deemed an adequate explanation. When a child has been born resembling neither parents nor grandparents, a tradition of a great or a great-great grandfather, having the requisite features of body or character, is conjured up to account for the anomaly.

Moreover, the theory of evolution—which is generally accepted by physicists and scholars, and by many theologians, as the true and only logical explanation of the development of the universe and of all forms of organic life,—has been held by most evolutionists to absolutely necessitate the law of heredity to account for the variation and transformation of species.

But there are so many facts related to the subject which are inexplicable by this hypothesis of inheritance, that a widespread doubt has grown up quite recently as to the verity of the theory. At the present time there are many and notable opponents of the teaching among the most eminent scientists. With the leaders of scientific thought in Germany and France it is almost a received dictum to-day that there is, and can be in the nature of things, no transmission whatever of acquired character; that it is only and solely physical attributes which we inherit from our progenitors. From manifold researches in nature and life, made by many capable biologists, it is asserted that there is no instance of a parent handing down to his child the acquisitions and experience of his own life.

Professor Weismann, the distinguished German scholar, says: "There is absolutely no trustworthy proof that talents have ever been improved by their exercise through the course of a long series

of generations;" and from a careful sifting of the evidence of alleged instances of the kind, which have been recorded in the past and present, he insists that "There is no well supported fact of the transmission of acquired physical variations." After exhaustive study of the subject, he has arrived at the mature conviction that there is not only no transmission of acquired character, but also no transmission of acquired physical characteristics which are not inherent and potential in the germ cell from the beginning, and therefore susceptible of development by environment and natural selection; that what has heretofore been regarded as the transmission of faculties acquired by the parent were in the germ cell *in esse* —an inherent predisposition—and consequently capable of being transmitted.

A convincing example of the non-transmission of individual acquirements is the fact that for countless generations of the human family speech has appeared to be the inherent birthright of man alone, distinguishing him from the beasts of the field, and yet if a child of to-day were reared with animals he would have no more sense of articulate speech than they. In fact there are well known cases of children living wild in Germany, France and England in the eighteenth century who were only able to utter the cries of animals; not one of them when found was able to speak. On this point Weismann says:—"When we consider the constant and unremitting practise in speech which we gain in a lifetime, whether by speaking aloud or merely by thinking to ourselves, and remember that in spite of this effect of perpetual exercise for centuries upon the human brain and vocal organs, the power of speech has not become in the slightest degree fixed or intensified by heredity, I think we are justified, by this one fact alone, in altogether doubting whether acquired characters can ever be transmitted in any real sense. Moreover, their transmission is quite incompatible with the only theory of heredity which seems to me to be tenable."

As observed above, the hypothesis of heredity has been regarded by all evolutionists as necessary to account for the transformation of species, but Du Bois Raymond, the French savant, asserts that "The hereditary transmission of acquired character remains an unintelligible hypothesis, which is only deduced from the facts it attempts to explain;" and Weismann asserts that, "It has never been

proved that acquired characters are transmitted, and it has never been demonstrated that without the aid of such transmission the evolution of the organic world would become unintelligible." He holds that natural selection affords a completely adequate explanation for such evolution, and contends that heredity does not and cannot meet the requirements of the theory. In his several essays on heredity, collating the results of his own researches with those of other accomplished biologists and physicists, he elaborates a theory of the transmission to descendants of physical attributes, but never of such as are acquired by an immediate progenitor. In thus controverting the long established opinion on this subject—sustained by such observers as Darwin and Lamarck—he does not claim to have spoken the last word on the subject, but he believes he has demonstrated that the germ cell is comparatively immortal, and that it is that cell, and not the somatic or body cell, which carries the characteristics of species from generation to generation. He follows minutely the probable evolution into colonies of the cell of unicellular organisms—organisms practically immortal, since reproducing by fission the last one to exist will contain a part of the first one that divided; describing how by the law of the division of labor there has resulted the evolution of somatic or body cells, which carry on the life of the individual, and that of the germ cells, which are concerned only in the conservation of the race, these latter, like the protozoa, living an unending life, since though myriads upon myriads die, the last human being alive at the final cataclysm will contain an infinitesimal fraction of the primeval cell.

Darwin attempted to support the preconceived idea of the transmission of acquired faculties by his hypothesis of pangenesis, in which by the action of what he calls gemmules—excessively minute particles—the acquired characteristics were conveyed by the body cells to the germ cells and so transmitted to descendants; but he himself pointed out that the hypothesis was "only a provisional one." Weismann in his examination of the proposition declares it to be untenable.

The poet's aphorism—"Genius dying leaves no heir behind"—needs but be stated to be accepted. It is equally true with respect to talents which do not rise to the plane of genius. This modern teaching explains why this is so; why genius and talent, being pos-

sessions or acquisitions of the individual, are not transmitted to posterity. But these latest observers having demonstrated the theory of inheritance of character to be erroneous, what alternative hypothesis remains but that genius is an intuition, a reminiscence, a capacity or character brought over from previous lives to the present. Such explanation of the origin of genius by a plurality of lives is similarly applicable as a solution of the seemingly hereditary traits of average humanity, the common resemblances between parents and offspring. The reincarnating Ego is attracted, as the needle to the pole, and is impelled by its Karma, to congenial company. Birds of a feather flock together in the psychical as in the physical world, and the Ego seeks its like by an as inexorable law as that of gravitation; it is gravitation—psychic. And therefore we see the constantly recurring idiosyncracies exhibited in generation after generation of many families; we see parents and progeny like yet unlike, similar yet dissimilar. The dissimilarities are explicable by the individuality of the Ego, the similarities by physical inheritance and by Karma directing the Ego to its kind.

Materialistic science while refusing to recognize anything beyond matter and force points the necessity of spirit to account for the otherwise unaccountable; without admitting the ethical and spiritual, or physical reasons, for an immortal reincarnating monad it makes clear the need of such an entity and thereby indicates its existence.

There are of course many other logical reasons supporting the doctrine of rebirth and a persisting monad—persisting through all forms of organic and inorganic life, for what is the conceivable purpose of creation and evolution if it be not to evolve all things to perfection—but these reasons, partly physical and partly metaphysical, are beyond the limits of this paper. Conceding the conclusion of these most eminent biologists as to the non-inheritance of acquired character, what but the one alternative of rebirth is left?

The scientists fail utterly—they make no attempt—to account for the origin of genius, and they offer only an obscure hypothesis in explanation of the derivation of character, and that only as to the common heritage of the race, which is so closely allied to the inherited physical brain as to be practically inseparable and may without stretch of fact be classed with physical inheritance.

Whence then, after science has so spoken and all is considered and weighed, is the source of character—the real essence of the individual? Is there but one answer? Viewed as a matter of simple equity, is it not a sufficient handicap to struggling humanity that the physical "sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation," without weighting them down with a derived character, not their own, but which they must needs bear and expiate and transmit to the torture of future generations? Unless the world had slumbered for ages in such monstrous dreams would not this nightmare be considered the acme of injustice?

"In other lives have we not grown the fate
  And characters we bear?—and now we sow,
To garner hence, as here we reap the past?—
  The harvest weal or woe.

A prior life untoward fate explains
  And kindred mysteries; no other plan,
Philosophy avers, can 'justify
  The ways of God to man.'"

THE INDIVIDUAL GOD.

The union between the consciousness of the man on earth and the consciousness of his Individual God is a more difficult matter. As a rule at present it takes place naturally only when the body, the sensations, feelings and reason are plunged in deep dreamless sleep, but it is the object of those who aspire to do the Will of the Father, to bring about the union of consciousness in dreaming and waking life also.

This can only be done by aspiration, by patient, unwearying effort: and the first step is to believe in the presence of the Divinity within us and to make its presence and interest in us a real factor in our lives. We must realise that that "self" which we feel ourselves to be, the self that thinks and feels and senses and moves in its appropriate vehicles is the representative on earth of our Individual God, that the voice of conscience *is* the voice of our God, that our ideals in ethics and religion—our real religion—are the inspirations breathed into our hearts and minds by our Deific selves. And we *must* be prepared to do the Will of the Father as we come to learn it.

The Individual God stands to his representative on earth as Guide, Teacher and Friend.

Have you considered how it comes about that we find ourselves in such varied environments, offering such widely different opportunities for gaining experience. We believe that rigid justice rules the world: philosophically we know that this must be so. But who is the wise and impartial administrator of this intelligent law? Are there cosmic policemen and magistrates? Not so is the just law administered. Accuser, witness, judge and executioner are within ourselves and he is the higher Ego of each of us. But reward and punishment are ideas that we have to abandon when we try to think philosophically. All happenings are lessons. All life consists of lessons. As teacher our Divine Self brings us to lesson after lesson: and when we refuse to learn and turn away, trying to escape, he brings us back again and again. We should think of this next time the lesson seems too hard and we are inclined to cry out against Fate. I, the real I, have deliberately with full knowledge chosen this: it would be folly therefore to turn away. Let us face it,

whatever it is, manfully without fear or regret and we are bound to get through. Let us blend pleasure and pain and gather experience from every circumstance of life, as the bee gathers honey from every flower: then we shall be users of our environment, masters of our own fate.

But to do this we must have complete confidence and trust in our higher selves. We must feel that the duality is but temporary —just for the waking hours of a short earth life: we must feel that when the work on earth is over and the welcome recall sounds in our ears, we shall indeed rejoin the higher self in the realm of peace. We must be able to say with Job "I know that my Champion lives and that at a coming day he will stand for me in the earth and though together with my skin, all this beneath it shall be destroyed, yet without my flesh I shall see God: whom I shall see for myself, whom my eyes shall behold and not another," and having this certain faith the time will come when with him we shall be able to say "I had heard of thee by hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee."

Using the key given us by the Masters to aid us in our studies we can find this higher part of ourselves described in the sacred scriptures of the world under various names: but the idea of his being our Champion, or Redeemer, or Vindicator, or Saviour, is generally present. There is a little book, much respected by Students, called *Light on the Path,* in which he is spoken of as the Warrior.

"Look for the Warrior and let him fight in thee. Take his orders for battle and obey them. Obey him not as though he were a general, but as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires: for he is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself. Thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and sure. He is eternal truth."

This then is the idea that will move us and all men to greater righteousness, to nobler work; for as we learn to appreciate our high place in nature and our natural duty as Sons of our Divine Fathers: as we realise that we are the builders of the Temple which is to become his dwelling place on earth, so will the Father's light, the light of our Individual God, shine with greater and greater power in our hearts and minds and the stronger and better and

fitter shall we build his dwelling place; until, when the moral, mental and physical temple is ready, the Son and the Father shall merge into one and the temple be filled with golden light of wisdom, the radiance of divine compassion. Then shall we have become Masters of Life, self conscious, divine teachers, inspirers and helpers of the race, until all humanity is redeemed and this earth's goal of effort is attained.

We must *train* ourselves to listen to the Divine Speaker, to the voice of conscience. For this voice demands a very attentive hearing, a mere whisper at first, but the more attention we give, the louder and more distinct it will grow. It will tell us all Nature's secrets. Her purposes and our part in them shall be revealed. Its calm certainty is the token of our future insight and power. It is the voice of a teacher who can never fail us, who *may* be trusted, with our whole hearts. It is in truth the voice of our only teacher in the most real sense, for the function of other teachers is but to show us how to reach our inner self and hear his voice.

"Let the Counsel of thine own heart stand," says the Preacher, "for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it. For a man's mind is sometime wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in a high tower."

All religions exist to teach us this secret of ourselves, not excepting the religion of Jesus which has suffered so much at the hands of his professed followers.

I think that if we had his authentic teachings we should find that the prayer he taught to his disciples was based on this truth, was an Aspiration by the Son to his Father in Heaven. Not that this or any prayer was to be uttered in words, either mentally or physically, for surely an aspiration in words is an abomination. An aspiration to the higher self is a state of mind, a condition of consciousness, an intense feeling, not a formula, however beautiful: but since words must be used to describe that state, or condition, or feeling, Jesus formulated his description in what is known as the Lord's Prayer. I will conclude with a paraphrase of the version of this prayer that has come down to us in which I have endeavored to give some semblance of the aspiration which, as I believe, the Theosophist Jesus taught his Disciples.

As with all similar prayers it would be prefaced and ended by the word AMEN which stands as a name for the Inner God.

AMEN.

Father, dweller in the Inner Realm of Wisdom and Love, I breathe thy sacred name and call to thee.

May thy will and mine be one, that the Divine purpose may be fulfilled on earth.

Daily may thy light illumine and thy power sustain me in the work.

May my failures be forgiven even as I forgive the failures of our other selves in their striving to the same great end.

May all attain to wisdom and to peace.

Thus do I will, Powerful and Radiant Lord of the Realm Eternal.

AMEN.

THE IMMORTAL FAMILY.

Which of us knows much about the corals of Lake Baikal or the warm springs of Lake Issyk Kul; about the two strange seas that unite to form Lob-Nor, and how, when the one is full, the other is empty; or about the rivers of Kashgar that flow hopelessly into the Tarim sands; or the buried cities of the Gobi Desert? Which of us has even heard the names of such peoples as the Buriats, the Chukchi, the Tunguz? Have we even heard of the rich and populous provinces of Ussuria and Amuria, which rival California in mineral wealth and are not unlike its northern districts in climate?

These names may suggest something of the wealth of a great world of which we know so little, and which has been diligently explored by generations of Russians and Poles, the names of a few only of whom are known to us only because of a fancied relation between their explorations and English policy in Northern India. To a vast library of works already existing in Russian on the subject of these enormously extended and little known regions of Asia, a very valuable volume has recently been added by the Imperial Geographical Society of St. Petersburg, on the subject of Corea, its manners, customs, life, religion, and future commercial possibilities. It was only after reading passages of this very elaborate work that we realised how complete our own ignorance of Corea had been, in spite of the interest aroused in that remote kingdom by the Chino-Japanese War and the events that have followed it. We will not attempt to give a full account of the Russian explorer's information, but will be content to take up only two subjects which have close analogies in Indian life, namely, the practice of ancestor worship, and the social position of women. It is not too much to say that the whole fabric of Corean society is built on the idea of the family—the theory of descent from a common ancestor. In each family group there are two really important members, one dead and one living, and everything else revolves around these two. It is not to be questioned, moreover, that the dead ancestor of the family vastly outweighs in consideration its living head. The dead ancestor is the real or mythical male founder of each large family or clan; and the living head is his eldest male descendant in the senior line. This strict following of the law of primogeniture

brings about the fact that the head of the family may be a mere boy, whose uncles, grand-uncles, and even great grand-uncles are subject to him in many important particulars. The chief function of the head of the family is the celebration of the yearly sacrifice to the shade of the departed ancestor to whom the family ascribes its foundation; and, for the purposes of this funeral sacrifice and festival, the head of the family receives a double share of the inheritance, and is further entitled to annual contributions from collateral branches of the clan.

Now, here comes in the most interesting point of correspondence with India. We all know what an important part in Indian social life is played by the Shraddha offering of cakes and water to the ancestors in nine degrees of ascent. We know also that the fact that a particular individual has offered the Shraddha is deemed sufficient evidence that he is the lawful heir; and we further know that, theoretically, the heir receives the inheritance, in order that he may be in a position to meet the expenses of the Shraddha rites. So that the analogy with Corea is very close. The Russian writer does not make it clear how far the subsequent descendants of the founder of the house are sharers in the merit of the sacrifice, like the nine generations in the Indian rite. The point of especial interest here is that this matter of the Shraddha sacrifice is the very kernel of one of the most important elements of the Hindu religion —that element, namely, which is to be derived distinctively from the Brahmins and their traditional beliefs. We need not enquire what was the origin of this reverence for the dead ancestor; whether it arose from the necessity of preserving purity of race, among a mixed population, as was the case, for instance, in Sparta; whether it arose from the eminence of some national hero, whose sons and grandsons became the founders of a singularly successful community, as was the case with the twelve tribes of Israel, that is, the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. Or the custom may have had a purely religious basis, the founder of the family being a man endowed with a halo of supernatural power, like the Rishis of Vedic India, and the belief being that a share of this power, and the influence over the gods which it was supposed to confer, descended to his sons in the form of certain secret incantations, magical formulas, or mantras. Whatever may have been its origin, it is certain that this ancestor-worship was the kernel of the distinctively Brahminical religion—as distinguished from the religion of the

Kshattriyas or Rajanyas, with its teaching of re-incarnation, or development through a series of lives on earth, and a series of resting-times in Paradise. Of this doctrine of re-incarnation the Brahminical faith knew nothing till the Kajanya King revealed it to the father of Shvetaketu the Brahmin, with the words:—"This teaching, before thee, came not to any Brahmin, but was in all lands the secret doctrine of the Kshattriya alone." There is no trace of it in the Vedic Hymns, which made up the distinctively Brahminical ritual, or were the source of it, as it existed in the Sama and Yajur Vedas. And we find the Brahminical belief re-appearing to the present day, when, as we have seen, it forms the basis of the Law of Inheritance. So that the analogy with Corea, in the connection between ancestor-worship and inheritance is unusually interesting and complete.

The position of women in Corean society is practically what it is under Brahminical law. A Corean girl loses her freedom when she reaches her seventh birthday. Thenceforward she is practically a prisoner in her father's house, until transferred to equal bondage under her husband. She must never show her face to any other man; she must be concealed in a thick-curtained palanquin, or heavily veiled, when she goes beyond the threshold of her house—her husband's house, or her father's, that is, for she would never dream of claiming it as her own. She is hardly permitted to speak in her husband's presence, and it is considered that he would lose caste if he mourned for her death. One more analogy: widows are not permitted to marry a second time, though widowers are by no means similarly restricted. Further, besides his legitimate wife, a man may have four lawful concubines, while any departure from the strictest letter of the law is punished, in the case of woman, generally with death. The children of concubines are legitimate, and inherit on a footing of perfect equality with the children of the wife, except in the one matter of the head of the family, who has certain obligations touching the offerings to the dead, which are compensated by special privileges, in the matter of inheritance. Finally, marriages are made wholly without consulting the bride-groom and bride; they are a matter of contract between their fathers, and, in the choice of the wedding day, astrology plays a very important part. Readers familiar with Hindu law and custom will see how close this all is to the Sanatana Dharma of Manu, and the present day. They have only to refer to the first book of the Bhagavad Gita to find Arjuna describing just such a system, in the two respects of ancestor-worship and restriction of woman's rights, as existing already in his day. The loss of caste, consequent on mixed mariages, would form a third very interesting analogy had we space to examine it.

IN SEARCH OF THE REAL.

Picture to yourself three extremes of our human race: a little girl parading in her mother's silk skirt, her aunt's worn-out summer bonnet and her nurse's muff; a very young man hurrying out on a Saturday, his week's pay in his pocket, his heart all aglow in the expectation of the somewhat reprehensible enjoyments the evening may possibly have in store for him; a decrepit old wreck thirsting for a gulp of some really strong whiskey, that he might gasp for breath and that his fingers and toes might once more tingle with the generous flow of hot blood.

No representatives of civilized humanity could be more widely apart than these three. Yet the inner impulse, under the sway of which they all act, is in essence one and the same. All three want to feel they *really* live, to realize, to assert the fact of their living, to be conscious of it. Their every day surroundings, their duties and pleasures, their sensations and experiences, their sense of life, in fact, and of their own selves as part of this life—everything is so flat, so dull, so drowsy. The sort of life the Fates have imposed on them, is no life at all. And be it only for a short, short hour, be it only in pretense, only artificially, all three would give a good deal, would risk a good deal—in fact, do risk and do give a good deal—only to feel life, their own life vibrating through their very beings, active, intense, real: real above all.

And paradoxical as it may seem, all our vices and vanities, whether it be distorted and exaggerated sex instinct or gluttony, serve exactly the same end of demonstrating to us what the Real is and what it is not. And so long as we are not altogether definite and certain about it, we shall be prompted by this very search of the Real, at all the different stages of the ascending scale, first in our appetites, then in our longings, and still further in our aspirations.

Like the withered petals of a blossom, the allurements of the flesh and of psychic life will drop off, one by one.

One only has to watch the ebbs and flows of our ordinary, everyday life to learn that for all of us there must come a time—for some it has already come—when food and drink, warm sunshine and gratifying physical contact of every nature, even pain it-

self, will lose their power to appeal to our sensation. There will come a time, when even things not altogether material will be as nothing to us, so long as they must depend on outside impressions for their power.

A girl can never again live through the sensations of her first ball. No one would dream of supposing that a husband and a lover are synonyms. Exhilaration of gratified ambition, success in business, pleasure seeking—every single one of our human experiences which promise and grant sensation will pall on us, if repeated. Old soldiers tell us that even the buzzing and hissing bullet may pass you by, without arousing any of your strong emotions.

We have all heard, that, in the shops where sweet-meats are sold, all the new employees are allowed to eat as much of the richest confections as they will, with the inevitable result of their appetite being taken away from them. Life is both the suggester and the imitator of this practice. And in many an instance an envied possessor of the good things of this world is merely one of such new employees in life's candy store.

The reign of sensation is doomed to end.

Yet the desire to feel that we *really* live will stay, always imperious, always unflinching. And the experiences of our everyday life will continue as stale and as flat as ever, entirely unable to answer the unsatiable demand.

At this point of his career a man bethinks himself of his soul. Henceforward he will embark on the vast sea of psychic experience. He will be led by allurements of an unprecedented kind, of which most of his brothers and sisters know little or nothing. Possibly he will be taken for a lunatic, and certainly he will meet many very real dangers.

Mirroring as it does both the physical and the spiritual worlds, possessing the power of catering to the lowest of man's passions, as well as of helping his highest aspirations, psychic life is a very vast sea indeed. But what is psychic life exactly? To this only an outline of a general answer can be given, an outline, which every man and every woman must fill out of the innermost experiences of their lives. Psychic life is that life in which you may experience joy, that has nothing to do with any of our five senses. Psychic life is that life, in which you may experience pain, that will leave

no visible traces on your body. Psychic life is that life, in which remembrance breeds desire, and gratification only creates a new remembrance, without bringing definite and final relief. Psychic life is that life in which mind pictures and mind habits are omnipotent and into which free creative will may come only as an accuser and a scavenger. In fact, a confirmed sensualist will answer the description just as well as a man whose love of some especial science, some especial branch of research has made a mild maniac out of him.

And emotion is the natural channel, the trusted servant and the weapon of psychic life, both in its acute and its chronic state.

Though only a kind of sublimated, refined sensation, emotion is unlike sensation in this that it depends on no impression from the outer world. Quite the contrary it possesses the gift of fashioning the outer world and all that comes from it after its own likeness. It is through this magician that the brightest, the gayest of spring days may seem black, dreary and dismal. It is at the bidding of emotion that your heart feels light, hopeful and warm within you, in the midst of a raging storm, with the wind moaning like a lost soul, and the trees shaking and swaying like a flock of frightened giants.

Emotion has the advantage over sensation in this as well, that the vast range of the supernatural is always at its beck and call. Do we not all possess, in the memories of our childhood, some especially gruesome recollection, which still retains the power of sending delicious thrills down our backs—the image of a horrible old witch howling in an abandoned cemetery, a mysterious hand reaching out for us, as we pass a dark corner?

The mythologies of all the religions in the world, the lights, colors, the burning incense and the musical strains of our own churches all strive to appeal to emotion, to keep up emotion, to make use of emotion. However great the truths our religion has in its keeping, where is the one among us, whose religious feeling is free from emotion? Tears of repentance, fear of perdition, expectation of eternal joy, tremulous hope that a miracle might happen to confound our enemies and glorify ourselves—all these have for long centuries been and still are the great motor power of every religion, which possesses an outward body.

And what do we observe, when people break themselves loose

from the doctrines in which they were brought up? Do they not in most cases immediately plunge into the quagmire of various psychic abnormalities, do they not go to materializing mediums, healing mediums, writing mediums, to clairvoyants, astrologers, soothsayers? The reason is not far to seek. At the beginning always—and in some cases later on as well—even earnest seekers mistake for the Real that which affords immediate and almost palpable fuel for emotion.

Have we not all known, in different countries and at different stages of our troublesome theosophical career, active and earnest workers in our own theosophical field, who have given up their spiritual birthright of toiling for the Real, and finding the Real in the silence and obscurity of their own hearts, in exchange of the more palpable, though perchance illusory, red pottage of being ordered about by the Masters themselves, or, perhaps, seeing the bodily Master with their own bodily eyes? The examples are not very scarce. And as to the kindred of the late Madame Blavatsky, they have suffered much and suffered often from the persecutions of her various "reincarnations" and "mouthpieces," ever since the news of her death had time to get abroad.

Such is the almost irresistible fascination of the glamour, which psychic life endows with every feature of true reality. Yet this is not really to be regretted, as no man will find the Real, without having first learned to discern between what is vitally true and what is only seemingly so. Each note in the gamut of psychical life is just as necessary as every other note.

All life's experience is merely a phase in the search of the Real and must be allowed for. But, nevertheless, the difference between a tremulous youth hurrying to meet his lady-love and a Theosophist longing for some visible and palpable phenomena of occultism, which would confirm and bear out his hopes, is only in degree, and not in essence.

Truly emotion is so subtle and great a wonder-worker, that to "kill out the desire of sensation" seems the hardest task we could dream of achieving on the way to our spiritual rebirth.

A great and powerful magician is emotion. For it can feed and assert itself on almost anything and everything man, in his present state of evolution, can be conscious of. The purest mother-

love, the most inspiring music, the highest art and the most self-forgetting patriotism can, under certain conditions, become mere fuel for emotion, weakening and not strengthening us; just like personal ambition, sex attraction, self-indulgence or high-living of any kind.

But there will come a time when the reign of emotion with all its power, will also come to an end.

What will be the signs of its approaching end?

First of all we shall feel a dim dissatisfaction with the principles on which our life was conducted heretofore. We shall discern in our hearts the wish not to feel, not to experience, not to receive, but to will, to act, to be. It will dawn upon us that so long as sensation and emotion are our object, our experiences must necessarily be a double edged weapon which cuts both ways.

As long as sensation and emotion stand out before us as objects worthy of a life's labour, so long exhileration will bring depression in its wake, laughter will be followed by tears, activity by weariness. We shall suspect, at the earliest dawn of our liberation, that emotion unavoidably works both ways. More than this, there will come a moment in our soul's life, when pain will walk so closely hand in hand with pleasure, that we shall hardly be able to distinguish where the one ends and the other begins. The gasp of pleasure and the gasp of pain will be one.

Then it will be, that we would rather bear with a perfect blank, with inertia and indifference, than face emotion.

At this point, merely human, terrestrial experience fails to supply us with a clue to the situation. We sit with blank eyes and wonder: what next, what is it all about?

And were we incapable of understanding such a thing as divine intuition, there would necessarily be an end of us there and then. But we are so fearfully and wonderfully made, that the animal in us ends with sensation, the human mortal suffers and rejoices with emotion, and the immortal God begins with intuition.

Inertia and indifference, the temporary inactivity of our souls will bring us rest, and a new source of energy will spring up in our inner being. We shall recognize, that sensation and emotion are not to be sought, that they are not to be feared, but to be *mastered*. For the first time in our lives we shall recognize our own blindness,

and wonder how it was possible for us to have lived so many years in the claws of sensation and emotion, of passion and longing, when free creation and will were our birthright.

At this point we shall stop living for sensation and emotion, we shall make a resolute effort to master them, and, by so doing, we shall bid good-bye to natural and psychic life and stand on the threshold of the life of spirit.

When longed-for as objects, sensation and emotion will destroy our singlemindedness and corrode our will; they will isolate us from our nearest and dearest, they will make all our activities, even our search for pleasure, timorous and half-hearted. But when boldly used as mere instruments, as means, they will become the mainstay of grave and precious experiments, necessary for our normal growth. They will stop feeding our egotism and isolating us, but, on the contrary, will disclose abundant new bonds of common humanity between ourself and our fellow mortals.

If we identify ourselves with our emotions as we all of us do consciously or unconsciously—we verily are a "reed shaken in the wind," totally unable to pursue moral and spiritual ends, quite unfit to direct our own lives, or to influence the lives of others.

When we separate ourselves from them, when we keep steadily in mind that we are the observers and our most intimate emotions merely the observed—we shall gradually gain a firm footing in that holy of holies of the soul, which is truly the source of all strength, power and energy in our human lives.

But—objects our everyday self—what gain is it to me? It is dark in the holy of holies of my soul. I can not see there, I can not hear, I can not act!

True enough. In that dark chamber of our inner being there is none to speak, yet when we do arrive there, when we become accustomed to the darkness and the silence, a growing conviction will come to us that the darkness and the silence are only for a while. What is coming, what we are to expect, to look forward to—we do not know, we can not conceive. Yet the knowledge that we can really and consciously *be,* where there is nothing to sense, is already an incalculable gain.

Let us further trust the divine intuition of our hearts, and we shall be prompted firmly to believe that only with this silence and this darkness for our accustomed home, can we begin our fruitful and forceful search of the Real.

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

It becomes my duty as treasurer of the T. S. A. to remind its members that under the ruling of the present constitution, our organization relies for its financial sustenance upon their *voluntary contributions*. The system thus established has proved fairly successful in providing for the inevitable deficit in the expense account of our publications; but to support the measures undertaken and desired to be undertaken by the Secretary to enliven and extend the work for which the Society exists, it will be necessary for us to be more liberal in our donations. This suggestion does not apply to the particular few upon whom the treasurer has heretofore relied to come to the rescue in case of emergency, but is directed towards those good people usually in the majority who, believing it to be "more blessed to give than to receive," are self-sacrificing enough always to be willing to let the blessing accrue mainly to the other fellow.

Money intended for Theosophical purposes may be sent to the undersigned, who will in all cases immediately acknowledge receipt thereof. Remittances may be made in bank notes, by draft on New York, (other checks cost from ten to twenty-five cents for exchange), or preferably by Post Office Orders.

A. H. SPENCER,
Treasurer T. S. A.
Box 1584, N. Y.

TO OUR READERS.

There are many among our readers who feel an impulse to write something, either as a comment on something in THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, or following up some new line of thought. Very often, and very wrongly, they resist this impulse, through lack of self-confidence, or, perhaps, mere laziness.

We invite these future writers to begin at once. We shall be very glad to receive and consider anything they may send us. If THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM is to be read, it must first be written; and we should keep in mind that, in our Movement, we learn by teaching, and teach by learning.

THE EDITOR,
Flushing, N. Y.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

Notice of the time and place of the Convention will be published in the March number of THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

According to our Constitution "The Government of the Society is vested in its members in Convention assembled" and "any member may vote at Convention either in person or by proxy." Our Conventions have always been held in April, and that month will no doubt be chosen this year. Therefore you are requested to consider any plan of work or suggestion that you think would prove of value to the Society, and present the same in person if possible at the Convention, or send them in writing to the Secretary to be presented by him. In the event of your not being able to be present at the Convention, make out your proxy in time, send it to the Secretary. The arrangement of all this business will take a great deal of the Secretary's time, so you are requested to send your communication at once or at your earliest convenience. It is hoped that all who can manage to do so will be present at the Convention, and that branches will make a point of having at least one of their members present.

Fraternally yours,

THADDEUS P. HYATT,

Secretary T. S. A.

Box 1584, N. Y.

TO THE SECRETARIES OF BRANCHES OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

A report of the activities of your branch during the past year is requested, with a complete list of the members and their addresses and the names of the officers. Also please state whether or not your branch has a library, and if it has, state the number of volumes.

Fraternally yours,

THADDEUS P. HYATT,

Secretary T. S. A.

Box 1584, N. Y.